

HOW TO... Move data to a new disk

Moving all your files and settings to a new hard disk can be complex – but not if you use Paragon Partition Manager and follow Clive Webster's advice

PARAGON PARTITION MANAGER 8.0 PERSONAL



Paragon's Partition Manager 8 is a one-stop shop for anything you might want to do with your PC's hard disk. There are tools to partition a disk that's already in use, so you could partition off 10GB for that Linux distribution you've always wanted to try, or give games their own partition so you can quickly defrag it and squeeze an extra ounce of performance from your PC. It can also adjust the size of existing partitions on a live disk, which is handy if you've improperly configured a disk and find you're always running out of space.

Best of all, you don't need to know how hard disks work to use Partition Manager 8: wizards and diagrams take you through every operation. We've included the full version on this month's cover disc to help get you started.

Cloning an old disk can be handy if your old disk is behaving oddly or making weird sounds and you want to take advantage of the falling cost per gigabyte of modern hard disks – or you simply want extra storage space for all your files. However, just plugging in a new disk and copying files over won't move crucial Windows files and settings, and it can be a complex task. Partition Manager 8 – together with our step-by-step guide – simplifies the whole operation.

1 Our hard disk has started to make funny noises and we suspect it might soon fail, so we've bought a new one and attached it before turning the PC on. We now want to clone our ageing disk, so all the data and the three partitions we've set up on it will be transferred to the new disk.

On the main screen of Partition Manager, you'll find three panes that show details of your

disks, plus a list of tasks down the left. To start the cloning process, we must make sure our old disk is selected in the middle or lower pane. It should be by default, but look for a disk that holds the C: partition (the usual location of your main Windows installation). Click the Copy the entire hard disk link from the upper pane.

2 You need to choose your source disk. The bar graph representations should make it clear which is the old disk and which is the new, but a quick Google search for the model names shown on this screen should clear any confusion. Click Next.

3 The next step is to select the destination disk for your data. We had only two disks attached, and as we'd already selected one as the source disk it was obvious which was the destination disk. Be careful here if you have more than one storage device attached, as even thumb drives and external disks are shown by Partition Manager. If you're worried, detach other storage devices and restart the application. Click Next.

4 Once Partition Manager knows which disk needs to be cloned to which, you have to choose how you want to transfer the data. The yellow text box gives clear advice here.

The first tickbox – Copy all sectors, one to one – is usually best avoided as it copies disks verbatim. It would take our 80GB of data from our old disk and place it on our new 750GB disk, leaving 680GB unused. However, it can be useful if you're happy with the size of most of your partitions as they are, and you can resize partitions later with the Redistribute Free Space wizard.

The two Resize options – Remove free blocks between partitions and Copy data and resize partitions proportionally – help make the best use of space on the new disk. As we suspect our old disk might be on the blink, we've ticked Verify writing to make sure data is copied across accurately. You should check the Perform surface test option if you want to ensure that your new disk is free from data-damaging defects. Click Next when you've chosen your options.

5 As we chose the 'Copy data and resize partitions proportionally' option in the previous step, we can set how much of the new disk to use and have Partition Manager enlarge our current partitions proportionally to fill it.

The slider button determines how much of the new disk is to be used for the clone. We chose to use the whole disk, so put the slider to the far right. This means that our Windows partition grows from 10GB to an unnecessary 89GB, but we can shrink it back with the Redistribute Free Space wizard later. Click Next.

6 The next screen says Finish, but all that happens is the job is queued. To set the disk cloning going, you must go back to the main screen and click the Apply icon, which looks like a tick, on the toolbar at the top of the screen. Cloning can take an hour or longer, depending on the options you've used and how big your source and destination disks are, but you can leave the PC to it and return later to see the results.

If you want to add or alter partitions after the disk clone is done, it's best to restart the application to make sure Partition Manager picks up the changes properly. ☐

